

# ***City Council Meeting Minutes***

**August 29, 2017  
Library Meeting Room, 951 Spruce Street  
7:00 PM**

**Call to Order** – Mayor Muckle called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**Roll Call** was taken and the following members were present:

**City Council:**      ***Mayor Robert Muckle  
Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Lipton  
Councilmember Jay Keany  
Councilmember Chris Leh  
Councilmember Susan Loo  
Councilmember Dennis Maloney  
Councilmember Ashley Stolzmann***

**Staff Present:**      ***Heather Balser, Interim City Manager  
Kathleen Hix, Director of Human Resources  
Meredyth Muth, City Clerk***

**Others Present:**      ***June Ramos, Consultant***

## **REGULAR BUSINESS**

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### **DISCUSSION/DIRECTION/ACTION – CONSENSUS ON QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED FOR CITY MANAGER BROCHURE AND DATE FOR CITY COUNCIL RETREAT**

Mayor Muckle introduced Ms. Ramos and noted she was hired to help the Council determine what qualities the Council is looking for in a new City Manager.

Ramos stated this meeting is to review the highlights from the information gathering meetings and have conversation about what the Council is looking for in a new city manager and how to highlight that information in the recruiting materials to get the kind of candidates you want.

She reviewed the process she went through to gather feedback from staff, board and commission members, and the public. She noted some disappointment in the turnout for the meetings; she was hoping to hear from a larger group. She stated those who did

come were candid and honest in their discussions. There were overarching themes and patterns consistent across the groups. She stated the data is sound but she would have liked to have had more respondents.

Councilmember Leh stated he thought the staff input looked detailed. He noted there will be other chances for everyone to give input in the process.

Ramos stated she has been researching characteristics of an effective City Manager noting these are what she found: developing the budget; managing human resources, exceptional service delivery, planning strategically for community development, driving continuous improvement, a commitment to high ethical standards, team building, and providing leadership. This is the backdrop to use as you look at this data.

Ramos asked if Council had any questions about the report, was there anything surprising; anything that makes you mad, sad, or glad.

Councilmember Maloney asked if the varied staff groups answered similarly or not. Ramos stated the answers were very consistent across all three groups.

Councilmember Maloney asked how many of the boards were represented in those interviews. Ramos stated they asked each board to send two representatives to attend and in the end five or six boards were represented.

Ramos asked what they found that was a surprise:

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton asked if staff morale is an issue. Ramos stated there were some comments about micromanaging and communication. She noted she kept the questions focused on what you want for the future, not complaining about previous managers. She noted she didn't really allow that conversation but kept it focused on the future.

Mayor Muckle was surprised how consistent everyone was, people stated they wanted someone with vision; they noted very high level manager themes. Ramos noted there were overarching themes among all the groups. The only major difference was from employees who asked for a person with vision and a strategic plan; someone who could say no; and we have too many priorities. Staff wants a city manager who keeps the city on focus to help with staff burn out.

Councilmember Maloney asked what she learned about the staff/council relationship. Ramos stated council is coming to staff too much; the lines are blurred and employees want council to respect the chain of authority. Staff feels requests from Council sometime conflict with what managers are saying. Staff wants a manager who can manage the boundaries between council and staff.

Councilmember Leh was interested in the statement "redefining roles of staff, council, boards/commissions." He asked for more information on this. Ramos stated the

conversation revolved around some of the same previous comments about using the city manager as the filter for requests from the public, from council, and from boards. Staff stated they would like the manager to set boundaries with boards and allow staff the time they need to complete their normal work load. Staff noted their plates keep getting full with multiple requests and they want a city manager who can say no and prioritize work.

Councilmember Leh stated the city manager is supposed to hold people accountable, but was there a sense that employees want more management of directors. Ramos stated she heard no direct comments about directors.

Councilmember Loo stated the staff data sounds like there are a lot of dissatisfied staff members. The idea that staff doesn't want to be contacted afterhours made her angry because Council and the city manager work many hours at all times. Ramos noted the comment was really that staff wants to be responsive, but there needs to be some reasonableness about when staff is expected to respond.

Ramos stated what a new city manager can do is to get a higher level of positive engagement. She noted staff likes their jobs and their citizens but don't want Council in their day to day business. Councilmember Loo noted the city manager needs to tell both council and staff what the other expects and what pressures they face.

Councilmember Leh noted the goal is to look forward with this information not backward. He noted the word visionary was used a lot and he asked if that is what Council wants versus more of a caretaker in the city manager position. He stated Council should be setting the vision, not so much the city manager.

Ramos stated one citizen did ask for a problem solver, a project manager, not a visionary. Many respondents noted they want the council to set the vision and city manager to translate that vision into daily work. Many wanted someone who is about big picture thinking that will get results.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton stated he wants someone with vision but it needs to be someone who can help develop a shared vision with the Council and be collaborative in the process. Ramos stated that on the staff side people are looking for organizational vision from the city manager.

Councilmember Maloney stated the vision has to be shared between Council and the city manager and then the city manager can execute it. Mayor Pro Tem Lipton wants someone who can help the community create a vision and then execute it. Councilmember Stolzmann sees the position as facilitating a community vision. Ramos summed up the conversation as: the Council wants someone who can be collaborative and consensus based in developing a shared vision with the Council.

Councilmember Keany stated he interpreted some comments as “keep Council out of our hair and let me do my job.” The city manager will have to determine how to handle that. Ramos stated Council will have to decide what qualities it wants in a city manager that will manage that tension so Council doesn’t feel criticized and staff feel under pressure.

Ramos reviewed the eight categories that were overarching:

1. Visionary; big picture thinker
2. Strategic planning and implementation
3. Strong communication skills
4. Good interpersonal and collaborative skills
5. Developing a high performing team
6. Strong leadership skills
7. Exceptional customer service orientation
8. Strong budgetary and fiscal analytical skills

Members reviewed the current draft of the “ideal candidate” statement for the recruitment brochure and compared the language to the list from the feedback. Ramos noted there is already a great deal of alignment between what the feedback says and what is in the draft language.

1. Visionary:

Councilmember Keany defined this as organizational vision; the community vision is set by the Council. Mayor Muckle agreed the vision is from the Council; the city manager is to execute/facilitate the vision of the Council in a collaborative way. Councilmember Maloney would like the city manager to participate with the Council in creating the vision.

2. Strategic Plan, build a strategic plan, implement a strategic plan:

Councilmember Keany stated the strategic plan is to provide services to residents; it is not to create a new plan. Mayor Muckle agreed, he noted this is really what number one is. Councilmember Maloney noted this was a strong comment from staff, so it’s curious exactly what that means.

Councilmember Stolzmann stated it looks like this list is forgetting the day-to-day services of the city. The strategic plan is how to provide those services. She would like to combine strategic plan and customer service; that covers the day-to-day services.

Councilmember Leh stated strong leadership speaks to that. This is the ability to direct and motivate and execute on the day-to-day operations. The whole job is delivering services.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton thinks Strategic Plan Implementation is out of place. It is a result of the other items, not a quality/trait necessarily.

Ramos summed up this as the Council wants more of a strategic thinker, not a planner.

### 3. Communication Skills

Ramos stated an effective communicator was frequently asked for, someone responsive to emails, with the ability to articulate and interpret Council policy into operational action. She noted this also includes good listening skills.

### 4. Good Interpersonal Skills, Collaborative

Ramos stated there are many stakeholders: staff, council, residents, other communities, HOAs, CDOT, RTD, etc. This person must be able to work with all of these groups.

Mayor Muckle suggested combining items three and four for these purposes.

### 5. Developing high performing team, develop staff.

Ramos noted every group talked about this. A good manager builds a high performing team; has the ability to motivate, engage, build a motivating environment. Staff wants to feel good about our contribution. This was a strong theme in all groups.

Councilmember Stolzmann stated she is looking for a high degree of accountability in a city manager. She stated this is probably part of leadership skills.

### 6. Strong leadership skills

Ramos stated citizens stated they are looking for a city manager comfortable with change management; someone who knows how to combine small town character and good growth management. Ramos added the city manager needs to be able to manage conflict and diverse audiences who don't agree.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton wants someone with good critical thinking and problem solving skills. He wants someone who will give strong recommendations; someone who can be more forceful in problem solving. Councilmember Maloney stated the Council will need to be sure to invite the city manager to make stronger recommendations.

Councilmember Loo stated she doesn't want the description so specific that it leads the candidates to be inauthentic; just trying to match the description.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton stated deciding this language is an exercise to help us know what we are looking for and explaining that to the citizens. He stated he wants critical

thinking and problem solving skills listed in the brochure. This person's job is to fix all the little stuff before handling the big picture stuff.

7. Exceptional customer service

Ramos stated this is related to various comments about caring enough about the residents that you want to answer, want to streamline processes; don't make it hard for residents to work with the City. She stated many asked for a deep caring of public service; care about the job and the community. They want someone who is responsive to internal and external customer service.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton wants someone passionate about customer service, who will put emphasis on continuous improvement of our processes and ability to provide services.

8. Strong budgeting and fiscal analytical skills

Ramos stated this is really a basic understanding of managing a budget and budget development.

Councilmember Keany asked if that is really the role of the manager. He would rather have other skills in the manager and hire a finance director to do the budget. Councilmember Stolzmann stated this is really more causing the budget to be completed, not creating it. Councilmember Maloney stated any successful city manager will have this skill.

Ramos summed up this to be: someone who should understand and prioritize the budget; be able to communicate about the budget; and understand the finances and what it means for the City.

Public Comments

Deb Fahey stated she would like more included about citizen needs from a new city manager.

Suzanne Smith stated the Council needs to agree on what they are looking for in a manager. She stated wordsmithing is pointless if you can't agree on a scorecard to properly evaluate your candidates. The job of this person is organizational stewardship.

Steve Costello stated this is the feedback, Council needs to respect it; be open minded about the candidates. It would be shortsighted for Council to think Louisville is unique if it keeps good candidates from the process. We are a suburb and should open our minds to any candidate who can guide the city. It is important to recognize some residents were not happy with the last city manager. We need a manager who develops great leaders within staff.

RJ Harrington stated Council needs to be introspective about the feedback. It is also what we are looking for in City Council. Council's vision is shaped by the citizens. Residents are pushing for sustainability, yet no one is mentioning this about the new city manager.

Ramos asked what are the key overarching items to include in the brochure. Members decided they are:

- Creating a shared vision, implementation of the shared vision in a collaborative way.
- Big picture thinking and strategic implementation
- Combine exemplary communication skills, interpersonal skills, and collaboration
- Developing a high performing team combined with strong leadership skills
- Add a commitment to public service
- Change 8 from budget and fiscal skills to critical thinking and problem solving skills

Ramos asked if anything is missing from the list.

Councilmember Leh would like nimble or adaptable added; someone who can address changing circumstances.

Councilmember Stolzmann asked about next steps. This conversation informs the brochure, and she asked if the retreat would be to work out a scorecard for ranking the applicants.

Ramos stated the retreat is to determine how council is working together and how to have higher performance and communication among councilmembers.

Councilmember Stolzmann stated we will still need to develop a scorecard. Mayor Muckle stated that will happen at a later date. Councilmember Maloney noted it will be needed prior to October 30 when we start screening applicants.

Members decided on October 2 at 4 pm for the retreat.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Councilmember Stolzmann asked Council about scheduling a special meeting on Tuesday at 5 pm so members can meet to respond to an email. Members decided a special meeting wasn't necessary.

**ADJOURN**

Members adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

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Robert P. Muckle, Mayor

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Meredyth Muth, City Clerk